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FORMER INTELLIGENCE CHIEFS QUESTION IMPACT OF SOVIET EXPULSIONS
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WASHINGTON

A A Former CIA directors William Colby and Stansfield Turner said Saturday that the expulsion of 80 Soviet diplomats allegedly engaged in spying did little damage to longterm Kremlin espionage efforts in America.

"This is a wide open country; it's a playground," said Colby. "They may have lost some of their leadership for now, but it will soon be business as usual. They have many other people here even if you enforce the limit on diplomats." Turner said: "They may have been hurt, but it's not going to end spying. Give them six months, a year, and they will be back where they started." The comments tended to dispute assertions by Reagan administration officials that the expulsion of the Soviets had hurt Moscow's spying efforts in the United States. A senior official speaking to reporters on condition he not be identified said earlier in the week that the move had "decapitated" the espionage apparatus.

The Soviets will continue major spy operations because "thousands of Russians come into the United States every year" and that in addition to diplomats, many officials from Warsaw Pact nations visit the United States for long periods, Turner said.

Kicking the diplomats out of this country will hurt KGB spying efforts less than the Kremlin's own decision to deprive U.S. missions in Moscow and Leningrad of all 260 Soviet support workers, Turner claimed. Those workers, he said, were the eyes and ears of Soviet intelligence operating in the U.S. embassy and consulate.

The former intelligence chiefs spoke in interviews with The Associated Press at the end of a dizzying round of expulsion orders unprecedented in the half-century of U.S.-Soviet diplomatic relations.

First, following through with a March decision aimed at reducing Soviet spying in New York, the United States ordered 25 Soviet diplomats at the United Nations to leave the country.

Last Sunday, the Soviets retaliated by expelling five U.S. diplomats from Moscow.

On Tuesday, the Americans escalated by ordering 55 Soviets from missions in Washington and San Francisco to leave the United States.

The Soviets retaliated on Wednesday by kicking out five more Americans. In an even bigger blow that day, they said the U.S. missions in Moscow and Leningrad could no longer employ Soviet workers. From now on, the United States will have to send over Americans to work in such support jobs as cooks, drivers, handymen and telephone operators.

As a result of all these moves, each side will have a ceiling of 251 representatives in their bilateral missions.

Removal of the Soviet workers from the U.S. embassy is expected to make life difficult for U.S. diplomats who have leaned heavily on the locally-hired support staff to perform daily chores that require vast stores of energy, ingenuity, time and experience within the highly-bureaucratized Soviet society.

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State Department officials said that U.S. citizens would be sent to Moscow and Leningrad to fill the posts formerly held by Russians, and department spokesman Charles E. Redman acknowledged that using diplomatic slots for such jobs could detract from the missions' main function of monitoring developments in the Soviet Union.

Turner said, however, that ridding the embassy of the local workers was a "tremendous benefit to us, because the Soviets have always used them to spy on us." He predicted that once the publicity surrounding the expulsions dies down, the Soviets may alter their order to permit some citizens to work at the embassies and that the United States may let a few more Soviets into the United States.

"I don't think it's over yet," he said.

For continued spying operations in the United States, the Soviets can still call on members of the Soviet trade mission, Amtorg, as well as Soviet representatives at international organizations based in the United States, journalists and "40,000 Soviet seamen who come here each year on their ships," Turner said.

Asked which country ended up as the "winner" in the expulsions game, Colby said, "neither side. Both lost a little." "The tit-for-tat got a little out of hand," he said. "I think the best thing is to put this behind us and get back to worrying about the important issues in U.S.-Soviet relations." Colby was director of central intelligence under presidents Nixon and Ford. Turner served during the Carter administration.